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Mike Wallace

Joseph E. Range

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EC 78-1743

Preplanning FIREFIGHTING Before the fire



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Leo E. Lucas, Director

PREPLANNING — FIRE FIGHTING BEFORE THE FIRE

Mike Wallace

Rural Fire Planner

Joseph E. Range

Extension & Assistant State Forester

Climatic characteristics of high winds and very dry conditions make Nebraska extremely susceptible to wildfire. Therefore, preplanning is a necessary tool for rural fire districts. Preplanning for organizational needs and available resources will not only make a fire district more efficient but also more confident in its fire control capabilities.

What is preplanning? What should it consist of? These questions are answered in this publication.

Situation

Nebraska is one of several states where the majority of fire fighters are volunteers. These volunteers have been doing an excellent job throughout the state. However, though the majority of wildland fires have been decreasing in size, they have been increasing in number. Therefore, fire suppression is as important now as it ever was.

Preplanning

Preplanning involves putting on paper an organized plan, listing available resources, problems and solutions, and projected future needs within a rural fire district. This is a necessity in Nebraska because of the large number (426) of small fire districts. In most

cases one fire district does not have all the resources necessary to handle a large fire situation. Therefore, it must rely on help from neighboring fire districts, and sometimes from their neighbor's neighbor. To handle such a situation with efficiency it is important to know what to expect from the surrounding districts.

Preplanning takes time to develop. There are few volunteers who have this extra time. We hope this guide will make the task a little easier to understand and accomplish.

Planning Guidelines

1. Inventory all vehicles and the resources of each. This should include the following: radio numbers, radio frequencies, GPM, tank capacity, year of vehicle, amount of hose, and type of drive, 4 x 4.

2. Inventory other available resources such as light plane, boats, skid units and the locations of fire retardant and aerial applicators.

3. Assemble constitution and by-laws along with any other agreements made by the district.

4. List addresses and telephone numbers for the department roster and rural board members.

5. Include a schedule of equipment addition or replacement and the budget for the scheduled equipment.

6. List all meeting and training times.

7. Explain the alerting system.

8. List law enforcement officials and pertinent organizations.

9. List special problems or high hazard areas. Describe the type of hazard, its location, and for each of these hazards a plan of attack.

10. Include maps of the rural fire district showing the location of water, travel routes, private dwellings, high hazards, and the type of terrain.

11. Include Mutual Aid plan with other area fire districts.

12. Develop and conduct an active fire prevention program.

13. Make recommendations as to future needs and concerns.

Benefits to Fire Districts

1. Better efficiency within fire districts because all resources available to the districts are written down on paper and located in one booklet.

2. The ability to plan ahead for equipment replacement and to determine the approximate cost for that equipment.

3. The plan can be reviewed by firemen and other officials to find out how the department operates and the resources it has available.

4. The plan can be used by neighboring fire districts when in mutual aid situations.

Services Offered Through the Nebraska Forest Service

At present the Nebraska Forest Service is helping rural fire districts write fire plans. The plans are put together by the rural fire planner with input coming from the rural fire districts. The plans are then published and returned at no cost to the fire districts. The plans should then be updated every year by the rural district if they are to stay current.

Purpose

1. To help rural fire districts become more self sufficient and better organized.
2. To help rural fire districts coordinate their activities when in mutual aid situations.
3. To eventually have a comprehensive state wide fire and disaster plan.

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